(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) The Conde Nast Traveller, UK, in its Readers' Travel Awards 2005 has rated India fifth amongst the top 20 tourist destinations of the world. The TTG Asia has rated Ministry of Tourism as the best National Tourism Organisation. Such accolades for India from reputed international publications may boost tourist arrivals to India.

(b) An estimated 3.37 million foreign tourists visited India during 2004. Going by an estimated growth of about 14% observed during the first 10 months of 2005 as compared to same period of last year, it is expected that tourist arrivals during 2005 may be around 3.8 million.

(c) to (e) A number of steps have been taken by the Goverment in recent time to improve facilitation for tourists as also to improve the infrastructure and provide security. Ministry of Home Affairs have been requested to improve Immigration services at international airports. Tourists are being provided information about Indian destinations, and assistance required to plan their trips to India through the web sites of Ministry of Tourism and various State Goverments. Matter is being pursued for augmenting the hotel accommodation in the country. Providing safety and security to both foreign and domestic tourists is high on the Ministry's priority list and introductions of tourists police is one such measure to ensure tourist safety.

Policies to build new hotels by private sector

713. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Goverment have granted higher allocations to keep the tourism industry on the priority of State Goverments;

(b) if so, the details of such allocations made to Andhra Pradesh during the current year;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Goverment have instructed all the States to initiate policies encouraging private sector to build new hotels;

(d) if so, the reaction of the State Goverments in this regard; and

(e) the action taken thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) Yes,Sir. In the year 2005-06 the budget allocation for the Ministry of Tourism is Rs.786.00 crore against Rs. 500.00 crore in 2004-05.

(b) No specific allocation is earmarked/released to the State Goverments/UT Administrations. However, funds are sanctioned/released every year on the basis of prioritization of proposals in consultations with them and subject to availability of funds. Rs.28.28 crore has been sanctioned and Rs.23.16 crore has been released for Andhra Pradesh for implementation of prioritized to tourism projects during the year 2004-05 and no tourism projects have so far been sanctioned during the current year.

(c) to (e) In the State Tourism Minister's Conference held in New Delhi in March, 2005, the State Governments have been advised to streamline their land policy by rezoning and redefining land use to facilitate development of adequate hotel rooms in metro cities and at tourism sites. In order to encourage construction of hotels in the country, the Ministry of Tourism has the scheme "Incentives to Accommodation Infrastructure" granting Capital/Interest subsidy to hotels.

Employment potential in tourism industry

714. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether her Ministry have made a study of the employment potential, both direct and indirect, of the tourism; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY) : (a) and (b) The Ministry of Tourism